

# DEPARTMENT MUSIC

## A HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

CHARLES DEMUYNCK

ROBERTA VEAZEY

CONDUCTORS

RANDY WHEELER

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Tuesday, December 5, 2000  
The Centre  
7:30 p.m.

UNIVERSITY  
OF  
EVANSVILLE

# A HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

## PROGRAM

Sing a Song of Christmas ..... arr. David T. Clydesdale  
Anne Geissinger, Mezzo-Soprano

A Ceremony of Carols ..... Benjamin Britten  
Wolcum Yole!  
There is no Rose  
Balulalow  
Lydia Herring, Soprano

Deo Gracias  
As Dew in Aprille  
This Little Babe

Women's Chorus conducted by Roberta Veazey  
Ken Gist, Harpist

*Les Patineurs* (Skater's Waltz) ..... Emil Waldteufel

Christmas Day ..... Gustav Holst

Jennifer Tuley, Soprano  
Anne Geissinger, Mezzo-Soprano  
Matthew Latta, Tenor  
Wesley Miller, Baritone

Parade of the Wooden Soldiers ..... Leon Jessel  
arr. Morton Gould

Excerpts from *Messiah* ..... George Frederick Handel

Pastoral Symphony  
Why do the Nations

Joseph Hopkins, Baritone  
String Ensemble

Let us break their bonds

University Concert Choir

Polonaise from *Christmas Eve* ..... Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

Audience Carol Sing Along (please refer to printed carol texts)

*Messiah*: Hallelujah Chorus ..... George Frederick Handel

Christmas designs provided by Guest House Florist.

# ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL

Charles Demuynck, Conductor

## Violin I

Pam Parisi,  
Concertmaster  
Sarah Atkinson  
Anna Christell  
Shana Essma  
Luke Ho  
Michelle Hummel  
Erika Proegler  
Yuko Saito  
Emily Thompson

## Violin II

Erin Brady, Principal  
Shauna Bily  
Kasey Campbell  
Mindy Copeland  
Amber French  
Katrina Goffinet  
Brian Maney  
Rachel Schlachter

## Viola

Gardner McDaniel,\*  
Principal  
Aurora O'Connor,  
Assistant Principal  
Carol Dallinger\*  
Erin Paschke  
Laura Racine

## Cello

Sarah Bielish,\*  
Principal  
Miranda Meadows,  
Assistant Principal  
Sarah Francis  
Kristine Miller  
Nicole Poag  
Anne Wetzel  
Cindy Willis

## Bass

Timothy Pearson,\*  
Principal  
Josh Burger  
Jason Samples

## Flute (Piccolo)

Brooke Jerrell  
Melissa Wehrman  
Mary Reuter

## Oboe

Edwin Lacy\*  
Katie Christenberry

## Clarinet

Brad Miller  
Sarah Bryan (also Bass  
Clarinet)  
Sheila Wickam (also  
E♭ Piccolo Clarinet)

## Bassoon

Lisa McKelvey  
Ellen Berman

## Horn

Allan Browning  
Elizabeth Plank  
Leslie Krodel  
Sarah Kleber

## Trumpet

Kirk Donovan,  
Principal  
Chris Nigg  
Theresa Krueger  
Tad Dickel

## Trombone

Jessica Major  
Dominic Thompson  
Art Fuerte

## Tuba

Aaron Sisson

## Percussion

Susan Conrad,  
Principal  
Kat Ranson  
Margaret Halbig  
Abby Gaskins

## Synthesizer/Celesta

Margaret Halbig

## Harpsichord

Trisha Wallace

## Harp

Ken Gist

\*faculty members

## PROGRAM NOTES

**Benjamin Britten** remains one of the most revered and endearing vocal music composers of the 20th century. Best known perhaps for his operas, such as *Peter Grimes* (1945) and *The Turn of the Screw* (1954), and his *War Requiem* (1962), Britten also wrote a great variety of choral music, including several cantata-like works, which he referred to as "church parables."

Britten studied at London's Royal College of Music and moved to the United States for a time following graduation. He achieved his first significant acclaim during this period for works such as his *Violin Concerto* (1939) and *Sinfonia da Requiem* (1941). After three successful years, Britten returned to England.

On the month-long journey home aboard the *M.S. Axel Jackson*, Britten became acquainted with Gerald Bullett's *The English Galaxy of Shorter Poems* (1933). From this collection, Britten selected a group of Christmas texts that date from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, and for the remainder of the voyage, he began to set the poems to music. Originally intended for boys choir and harp, *A Ceremony of Carols* is performed today in a variety of settings for treble voices.

Selections heard tonight include the cheerful, rhythmic welcoming song, "Wolcum Yole," the second of the work's eleven movements. The following movement, "There is no Rose," celebrates the virgin birth of Jesus Christ and urges the listener to follow his holy example. "Balulalow" is a lullaby for the baby set for solo voice and harp. "Deo Gracias" is a declamatory telling of the story of Adam's fall and Jesus' redemptive acts. "As dew in Aprille" offers words of praise to Mary, the mother of the child, with another full choir setting. "This Little Babe" features quick staccato rhythms in its fiery proclamation concerning the baby Jesus' power over Satan.

Britten's countryman, **Gustav Holst**, exhibited an early love and talent for music. His first professional experience was as an organist and choirmaster at various churches in Gloucestershire, but neuritis forced Holst to switch from the organ to the trombone. At the age of twenty-one, he began studies at the Royal College of Music in London with Sir Charles Villiers Stanford and, following his graduation, Holst pursued a career as a trombonist and taught at his alma mater. In 1905, he accepted a position at the St. Paul's Girl's School in Hammersmith, England, a position that he held for most of the rest of his life; many of his compositions, such as his *St. Paul's Suite* (1913), reflect the deep affection he felt for the institution.

Holst's orchestral reputation rests on *The Planets* (1916), a programmatic work with mythological overtones that was based on the seven known planets at the time. He also ventured into the philosophy of non-western cultures, as is demonstrated by his settings of Brahman scriptures and his opera, *Savitri*. Like his fellow Englishman and close friend Ralph Vaughan Williams, however, Holst loved the music of Britain and wrote many works inspired by English lore and folk music. *Christmas Day* is such a work. Composed in 1910, the work uses John Mason Neale's English translation of the Latin hymn, *In Dulci Jubilo* and sets it to a traditional German tune. The hymn is arranged for chorus and orchestra in a wonderfully festive, and particularly English, manner and expresses well the joy of the Christmas season.

Like Holst, **Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov** was an intensely nationalistic composer. One of a group of nineteenth-century Russian composers known as "The Five," Rimsky-Korsakov strove to bring the Russian people a national music based on their history, literature and folk culture. A former naval officer and inspector of military bands, Rimsky-Korsakov also taught at the St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music and was known for his wonderfully imaginative works and creative orchestrations.

Rimsky-Korsakov's greatest compositional triumphs during his lifetime were his operas, which frequently blended Russian literature and high cultural history with more rustic and primitive folklore. His opera, *Christmas Eve* (1894), draws its basic plot from a story by Nikolai Gogol, but many of the opera's more unusual elements are Rimsky-Korsakov's own creations based on a combination of pagan elements and rituals with Gogol's tale. The opera, filled with supernatural creatures and comic subplots, follows the attempts of a young blacksmith to woo the daughter of a Cossack. Scorned and ridiculed by his beloved, the blacksmith wins her favor only when he presents her with a pair of ornate boots granted to him on his request by the Empress herself. The festive "Polonaise" begins the scene in which the blacksmith makes his unusual request of the monarch; the dance introduces the audience to the court of the tsaritsa and admirably sets the festive mood present in the palace during the ongoing Christmas celebration.

George Frederick Handel was a composer inspired by international styles. He studied music as a young boy in Germany before moving to Italy in 1706. He traveled throughout Italy and learned the Italian opera style before returning to Germany in 1710 and assuming the post of musical director to the Elector of Hanover. The associations between Hanover and the English monarchy soon produced many opportunities for travel to London, where Handel first achieved success with Italian operas while absorbing the English choral style.

Handel's original intent upon his relocation to London was to produce Italian opera under the auspices of the newly formed Royal Academy of Music, but the growing success of English vernacular entertainments quickly diminished the London public's desire for Italian works. Handel likewise turned to vernacular works, but rather than operas in English, he chose to write oratorios. Initial successes were promising but failed to achieve the financial results for which Handel hoped. At a time of desperation, Handel was presented with the opportunity to give a benefit concert in Dublin "for the relief of the prisoners in the several gaols (jails), and for the support of Mercer's Hospital in Stephen Street, and of the Charitable Infirmary on the Inn's Quay." Shortly after this invitation, Handel's friend, poet and librettist Charles Jennens, presented Handel with a compilation of scripture passages taken from various Old and New Testament books that focused on the prophecy, life, sacrifice and future glory of Jesus Christ. Handel was so moved by the collection that he began to set the libretto to music, and in twenty-four days, from mid-August to mid-September of 1741, Handel composed the 2 hours and 30 minutes of music that make up *Messiah*.

The oratorio premiered on April 13, 1742, in Dublin and was an immediate success. Music historian R. A. Streatfield cited *Messiah* as "the first instance in the history of music of an attempt to view the mighty drama of human redemption from an artistic viewpoint." *Messiah's* popularity no doubt derives in large measure from its subject matter, but it is also superb music. A case in point is the wonderfully lyrical "Pastoral Symphony," which serves the dramatic purpose of providing a transition from the biblical verses dealing with the prophecies of Jesus' birth to those that tell the actual story of the shepherds, the angels and the baby in the manger. "Why do the Nations" comes from the second part of the oratorio and is a setting of Psalms 2:1-2. The emotion in the scriptural passage is clearly portrayed in Handel's music with the use of the raging tremolo in the strings as well as the intensely rhythmic character and declamatory nature of the vocal part. The following chorus, "Let us break their bonds," sets the next verse of Psalms 2, and is therefore a direct continuation of the previous aria. The intense emotions remain and are heard in the expressive nature and increasingly contrapuntal texture of the choral parts. The famous "Hallelujah" chorus, based on selected verses from the Revelation of St. John, concludes the second part of the oratorio and affirms God's position as ruler of all. The repetitive motive of "Hallelujah" and "for ever" in the chorus, as well as the rhythmic chord progressions strengthen the message of the piece.

Several traditions surround *Messiah*. One of these is its now common and integral association with Christmas, despite the fact that it was originally conceived for and was first performed during the Easter season. The oratorio, too, has commonly been subject to an editor's or arranger's pen and to the whims of performers. To be fair, Handel began this tradition, composing new selections, changing instrumentation and freely editing his own work for individual performances and performers, a practice perfectly in keeping with the practical mindset of Baroque composers and performers. The immense popularity of the work, however, has led many subsequent composers, including Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, to offer their own orchestrations or versions of the work. Many of these versions, particularly Mozart's, have achieved great success on occasion. The orchestration presented this evening, however, is consistent with Handel's own preferences. And, of course, the tradition of the audience standing during the singing of the "Hallelujah" chorus remains. This tradition, too, dates from Handel's own time. Some say that it began at one of the first performances of the work, when King George II was so awestruck by the piece that he stood up. Another version of the tale suggests that the King had fallen asleep and that the thunderous entrance of the choir startled him. He naturally shot up from his seat to yell, "What insolence!" The audience, whether from dutiful reverence or abject embarrassment, followed the king's example. Regardless of which circumstance, if either, is correct, the tradition remains. Please feel free to observe it if desired.

Shana Essma, Melissa Wehrman, Tim Marquette, and Danielle Suder

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